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Horse: The Other Red Meat (/full-blog/2013/02/horse-other-red-meat.html)

"horse meat inspection" (/full-blog?category=%22horse+meat+inspection%22), "horse meat" (/full-blog?category=%22horse+meat%22)



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Congress recently allowed a five year ban on horse meat inspection to expire, allowing Americans to explore their culinary creativities with a new medium - horse meat.[1] For the uninitiated, horse meat can be described as a slightly gamey, sweet red meat with a flavor between beef and venison.[2]

But who could eat friendly old Mister Ed? A dish consisting of raw horse meat is known as Basashi in Japan,[3] and a similar dish is popular in Italy.[4] Americans even ate horse meat in the 1940s.[5] Historically, starving troops in Napoleon's grand army ate horse in times of hardship.[6] Horse meat

may have made its way to your plate; a well-known burger chain's reputation has taken a hit after admitting that some of its burgers in the U.K. and Ireland contained horse meat.[7] Additionally, Irish food safety officials found that beef from Poland contained up to 75% horse meat.[8] Grocery stores in Sweden have pulled Findus Lasagne from their shelves for containing 60 to 100% horse meat.[9] Findus stated that it does not believe horse meat is a food safety issue.[10] However, the source of the horse meat in the above cases is unknown.[11]

The American romantic notion of horses as human companions or pets[12] has overshadowed the real issue. When horse meat is consumed, human health should be top priority. Before the expiration of the inspection ban, horse meat was unregulated because it was obtained in secret. The meat may contain dangerous deworming medicines, antibiotics such as chloramphenicols and nitroimidazoles, and growth hormones that threaten human health.[13] This is especially true when the source of the horse meat is an American horse farm because these horses are raised for sport instead of consumption.

During the inspection ban, horse meat would fetch up to \$40 per pound on the black market, incentivizing owners to butcher low-potential horses or thieves to slaughter horses at night for their flesh.[14] Now that inspecting horse meat is legal, the price will drop due to increased supply. The price decrease will also reduce the incentive to steal horse meat.

Regulation of horse meat is necessary to keep consumers safe, and current federal regulations grant authority for horse meat inspection for human consumption.[15] Unfortunately, the necessary federal funding for inspection has been rescinded.[16] With federal funding, food companies would have a legal supply chain for consumer-safe horse meat. As the taboo against horse meat weakens, demand for legal, safe horse meat would create a market for raising, distributing, and selling food horses. Although thoroughbreds may not be the palatable breed of choice, demand for horse meat may even bolster the sluggish horse industry.

[1] Justin Juozapavicius, *Horse Meat Inspection Ban Lifted in the U.S.*, HUFFINGTON POST (Nov. 30, 2011), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/30/horse-meat-consumption-us_n_1120623.html.

[2] *What Horse Meat Tastes Like*, HUFFINGTON POST (Dec. 1, 2011), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/12/01/horse-meat_n_1123315.html.

[3] *Basashi (Raw Horse Meat)*, JAPAN FOR THE UNINVITED, <http://www.japanfortheuninvited.com/articles/basashi.html>.

[4] *What Horse Meat Tastes Like*, *supra* note 2.

[5] Juozapavicius, *supra* note 1.

[6] *A History of Consuming Horse Meat*, BAN ON SLAUGHTERHOUSES IN THE UNITED STATES, <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~napar20s/classweb/worldpolitics/Historyof.html> (last visited Feb. 10, 2013).

[7] *Findus Frozen Beef Lasagne Found To Contain Up To 100 Percent Horse Meat*, HUFFINGTON POST (Feb. 8, 2012), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/08/findus-lasagne-horsemeat_n_2646284.html?ref=topbar.

[8] Shawn Pogatchnik, *Horse Meat Found in 75 Percent of 'Beef' Imported to Ireland: Government*, HUFFINGTON POST (Feb. 4, 2013), http://huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/04/horsemeat-ireland-75-percent-polish-beef-ireland_n_2618501.html?slide=more266839.

[9] *Findus Frozen Beef Lasagne Found To Contain Up To 100 Percent Horse Meat*, *supra* note 7.

[10] *Id.*

[11] *Id.*

[12] Juozapavicius, *Horse Meat Inspection Ban Lifted in the U.S.*, *supra* note 1.

[13] Suzanne Bush, *EU Bans Drug Tainted Horse Meat*, PENNSYLVANIA EQUESTRIAN (Oct. 2009), <http://www.pennsylvaniaequestrian.com/news/EU-ban-1009.php>.

[14] Kim Segal and John Zarrella, *Horses Being Killed in South Florida - For Their Meat?*, CNN (Aug. 10, 2009), http://articles.cnn.com/2009-08-10/justice/horses.slaughtered_1_horse-meat-south-florida-society-geronimo?_s=PM:CRIME.

[15] See 9 C.F.R. § 355.2; See also 9 C.F.R. § 327.21.

[16] Pat Raia, *Amendment Strips USDA Horsemeat Inspection Funding*, THE HORSE (June 20, 2012), <http://www.thehorse.com/articles/29298/amendment-strips-usda-horsemeat-inspection-funding>.

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